Action Report Fall 2005 Vol.44 No.2

The Quarterly Newsletter of Peace Action and the Peace Action Education Fund

Peace Action

We (The People) Have Spoken, Now We Will Take Action

The peace movement now has a stronger mandate, and more 'political capital', than George W. Bush had after either of his (by hook or by crook) elections. We are fresh from the demonstration in Washington, D.C. on September 24th that was the largest, most powerful and most successful antiwar demonstration since Bush II has been in power. According to MSNBC, over 500,000 people from across

America gathered in the nation's capital to protest the war in Iraq and demand that W. bring our troops home now. According to the latest ABC news poll, 63 percent of Americans polled think that the government should be forming a plan to pull American troops out of Iraq. If poll numbers can be construed as political support, it's the peace movement that's winning hearts and minds.

Demonstrative of the strong majority of Americans who disapprove of Bush's Iraq war, half a million people

came to DC to demonstrate, lobby, learn organization skills, commit civil disobedience and celebrate the rejuvenated power of the grassroots peace

nation's capital."



Some of the thousands of Peace Action members in DC on September 24th.

movement. The three day event galvanized a movement that is poised to do what its detractors have claimed it would never be powerful enough to: force an end to the war in Iraq and change the political dynamic of this country.

On the Monday following the demonstration members of Peace Action and United for Peace and Justice made over 300 congressional lobby visits.

The citizen peace lob-"According to MSNBC, byists told over 500,000 people from members across America came to of Conthe demonstration in the gress to start doing

their job or

they'd soon find themselves out of work.. Job one: develop a plan to bring the troops home. Job two: stop enabling our violence-addicted administration

by rubberstamping spending bills that continue to fund the Iraqi war. Job three: the foreign policy of any party, whether it be that of George W. Bush or Hillary Clinton and her Democratic hawks, that keeps our troops in Iraq and perpetuated an endless so-called war on terror is unacceptable and not politically tenable.

While Peace Action members successfully lobbied our government's Legislative branch, fellow members showed their resolve across town at the seat of the Executive branch. Cindy Sheehan and nearly four hundred other determined and dedicated individuals committed organized civil disobedience directly in front of the White House. After being released, Cindy explained her mo-

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Peace Action on Capitol Hill

Strong grassroots pressure on Congress can change policy, but only if it's organized and effective. Peace Action plays a unique role by translating Congress's actions—and inactions—to our members and affiliates around the country. We then communicate the work and opinions of our members to Congress and their staff.

This year we've had our work cut out for us. Because there has been a huge disconnect between Democratic members Congress' statements on Iraq and their continued support for funding for the war, Peace Action has been playing an especially active role on Capitol Hill. In April, Peace Action met with Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) and her chief of staff on the issue of bringing our troops home from Iraq. At Peace Action Executive Director Kevin Martin's suggestion, Woolsey decided that next Congressional Progressive Caucus meeting would focus on Iraq.

Reace Get Out of Ivan Now!

Rep. Lynn Woolsey addresses a rally in front of the White House before delivering 25,000 petition signatures to Bush.

Our work did not end there after the meeting, the Executive Director of the Progressive Caucus asked us to help coordinate and develop a strategy and agenda towards bringing U.S. troops home and ending the occupation. We also facilitated monthly Iraq Coordinating Committee meetings with 25 experts, including Members Congress, their staff, and leaders of the peace movement.

Continuing this process, in August, Peace Action coordinated and participated in discussions on an exit strategy, based on a proposal by longtime pro-peace activist Tom Hayden. Several groups agreed upon a five-point statement principles, which Peace Action and our ally, The Progressive Democrats of America (PDA), released as the People's Petition for an Iraq Peace Process. Since then, several groups have signed onto the campaign including the National Organization for Women (NOW) and others.

By September, we had collected over 25,000 signatures, and presented these to Rep. Woolsey during a milestone Congressional hearing on creating an exit strategy for Iraq. At the end of the hearing, Woolsey thanked Peace Action directly for our work towards this historic event on Capitol Hill.

Besides showing appreciation to Peace Action at the D.C. hearings, Members of Congress

who are opposed to the war are grateful for our work on the local level. For example, Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ) thanked Mountain Peace Action on the House floor for its work, and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) called us directly to show gratitude for our work towards ending the war. Additionally, Congressional staffers often contact us for advice and help on legislative issues relevant to Peace Action's mission.

We will continue working with our allies, while strongly pressuring those who vote for war, wasteful military spending and the continued use of nuclear weapons to change their views. In addition to those mentioned above, Peace Action's other close hill allies are Neil Abercrombie (D-HI), John Conyers Jr. (D-MI), Barney Frank (D-MA), Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Charles Rangel (D-NY), Maxine Waters (D-CA), and numerous others. Moreover, our affiliates foster special relationships with their own members of Congress on the local level.

With your help, Peace Action will continue developing productive relationships with Congressional members and their staff and to push for real security through a foreign policy based on international cooperation, reduced Pentagon spending and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Vision of Peace

Peace Action will celebrate our 50th birthday in 2007.

As part of our celebration, we invite students to create a Vision of Peace

Help celebrate 50 years of peacemaking.

Vision of Peace

What does peace look like?
Who is a peacemaker in your life?
What makes a community peaceful?
How can people make peace with each other?

Here are some guidelines:

White paper 8X11 inches

Bold color is preferable: markers, tempera, crayons, cut paper

Open to students in grades Kindergarten-12th grade Contributions accepted through March 1st, 2006

We'll choose 12 visions of peace to use for calendars, shirts, mugs, stationery, tote bags and more!

We'll thank the 12 artists with a \$100 gift and Peace Action shirt!

Please send submissions to

Peace Action

1100 Wayne Avenue Suite 1020, Silver Spring, MD. 20910

Peace Action cannot return any art submitted for this contest. All art becomes property of Peace Action

Action Report

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RNEP The Thing That Wouldn't Die

Sixty years after the US dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Bush administration is pushing America to, once again, develop new weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP), a nuclear bomb nearly 100 times more powerful than the weapon used on Hiroshima is the current object of their WMD desire. RNEP would supposedly burrow deep underground to destroy subterranean "bunkers". However, experts agree that RNEP-somtimes called a mini-nuke-would produce tremendous radioactive fallout and result in the deaths of millions of people in used in an urban area.

Every year since 2001, the Bush Administration has sought funds for this dangerous new weapon and each year, the peace and disarmament community has successfully lobbied the congress to stop it. This year, amid significant antinuclear events such as the UN's conference on the Nonproliferation Treaty and worldwide commemorations of the sixtieth anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the House has rejected all appropriations for the new nuclear weapon. However, the insular Senate still supported it.

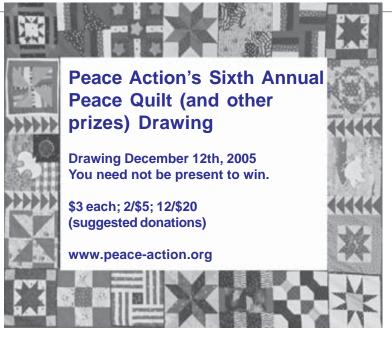
As of this writing, the Senate schedule and status of the Defense Authorization bill remains uncertain. Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Diane Feinstein (D-CA) have offered an amendment to take the \$4 million from RNEP and transfer it to the D.C. National Guard for training and equipment in the case of a mass casualty event. Peace Action supports eliminating the RNEP funds and transferring them to meet our real security needs and has been lobbying the Senate for just that. While each year since 2001, we have succeeded in getting more Senators to vote against RNEP. the final decision about the funding of new WMD will be made in a House-Senate Conference Committee later this fall.

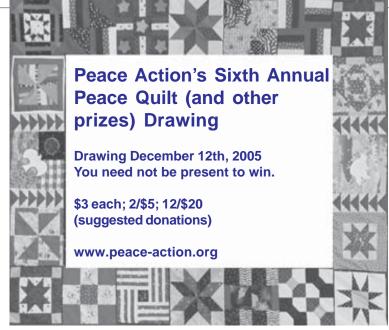
Currently Peace Action affiliates throughout the Southwest are organizing to put pressure on Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM), chair of the Senate Energy and Energy Appropriations committees. As chair, he will play a crucial role in the joint conference committee's negotiations between the House and Senate versions of the Energy Bill. Peace Action's message to Sen. Domenici and all members of congress is clear-RNEP is a dangerous and reckless program, which will undermine nonproliferation, and severely threaten our security.

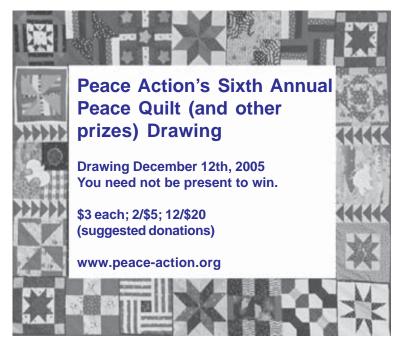
To underscore the danger presented by Bush's RNEP building initiative, Peace Action sought to recall the lessons of the past. Marking the 60th anniversaries of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombings on August 6-9th, National Days of Remembrance observances were held at major nuclear sites across the U.S. such as the Livermore Weapons Lab in CA, the Y-12 Nuclear Facility in TN, the Los Alamos Nuclear Lab in NM. and the Nevada Nuclear Test site. At those sites, as well as in Washington, D.C. where Peace Action hosted an observance, citizens gathered to demand total nuclear abolition.

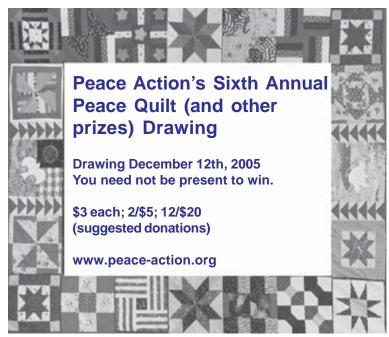
Elsewhere, scores of citizens took the message of abolition to their communities through out August. Peace Action groups from New Hampshire to Wisconsin to Hawaii organized events to commemorate sixty years since the U.S. nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These commemoration events were creative and varied and featured testimony from Hibakusha (atomic bombing survivors), floating lantern ceremonies, Japanese music, grassroots lobbying opportunities, anti-nukes rallies, film screenings and family activities to get the nuclear disarmament message out. These nationwide events educated thousands of citizens about the growing threat from the Bush administration's pro-nuclear weapon building policies and the urgent need to contact their elected officials to tell them stop the building of new weapons of mass destruction.

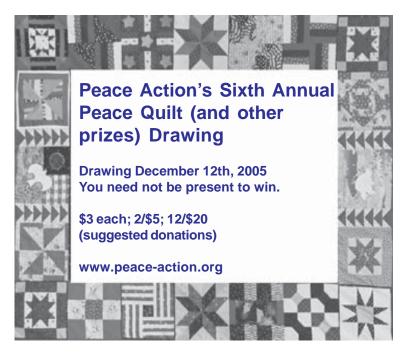
To further strengthen grassroots opposition to new nuclear weapons like RNEP, Peace Action organizers have also been leaders of the Mayors for Peace Campaign. This campaign has enrolled mayors around the world as endorsers of a comprehensive platform for worldwide nuclear disarmament. Dozens of mayors from cities such as Boston, MA, Evanston, IL, and Portland, ME signed on this campaign over the summer thanks to the work of Peace Action members in those regions.

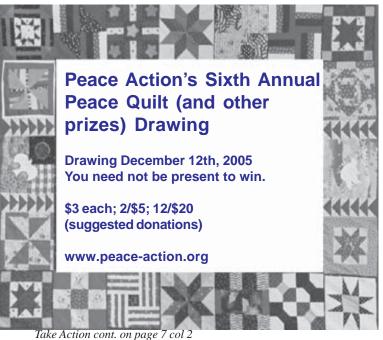












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Nukes cont. from page 2

Going forward, we must ensure that our leaders heed both the lessons of Hiroshima and today's citizens' demands for a nuclear-weapons free world. To that end, our first goal must be to ensure the full elimination of funds for RNEP and any other new nuclear weapons programs the Bush administration puts forth this year.

(a letter to congress template is available at http://www.peaceaction.org/campaigns/ active.html)

Take Action cont. from page 1

tivation, "Being arrested is not a big deal. Even though we were arrested for "demonstrating without a permit" we were protesting something that is much more serious than sitting on a sidewalk: the tragic and needless deaths of tens of thousands of innocent Iraqis and Americans (both in Iraq and here in America) who would be alive if it weren't for the criminals who reside in, and work in, the White House."

Though the "criminals in the White House" likely care little about their slipping poll numbers, they ignore the peace movement at their own peril. Those who participated in protests, lobbying, skills workshops and civil disobedience on the weekend of September 24th returned to their communities across the country invigorated and ready to engage their communities in the nuts and bolts work of ending the war in Iraq and getting rid of the pro-war junta in Washington.

Though taking the country back from its Right-wing hijackers will never be easy, we do not shrink from the challenge. Our determination to bring the troops home is now shared by the majority of Americans. If democracy still exists in this country, the criminals in the White House and the collaborators who enabled this war will soon be looking for new jobs and better attorneys.

All We Are Saying

Answers to questions about peace issues.

Withdraw The Troops Now!

Won't a military withdrawal from Iraq lead to further destabilization?

There is no stability in Iraq. The presence of our armed forces is fuel for the insurgent's fire, not water to quench the flames. The situation continues to get worse, although some administration officials would have you believe otherwise. Insurgent attacks have accelerated in their frequency, violence, and sophistication.

While on one hand, the US presence is now fomenting division and sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shia. those on both sides who are outside the Iraqi-Vichy government also have a common goal: to fight the US occupying force. Our military presence has become the single

greatest recruiting tool for the insurgents, and as long as we keep US troops in Iraq, we will continue to see the insurgency grow in numbers and strength. Iraq's problems will not get any better because of US force and additional US casualties will not cause democracy to magically bloom.

There are no good options left, but the single worst option is "staying the course". The recovery process will be long and painful, but the longer we stay in Iraq and try to "win", the longer and more costly the recovery process will be. We still have a responsibility to help the Iraqis rebuild, but our troops must come home—there is no workable solution that can be imposed by US military might.



Peace Action knock, knock, knockin' on Bush's door.



Support Homeward Bound

As the peace movement continues to gain momentum, polls show that six in ten Americans disapprove of the occupation on Iraq.

In the face of tremendous public support for reuniting our troops with their families, a bipartisan coalition of Representatives and Senators have anlution calling for troop withdrawal to begin by next fall.

Contact your Representative and urge them to support House Joint Resolution 55, "Homeward Bound", and to bring our troops home. Urge your state senators to offer a companion piece to H.J. 55.

nounced an important joint reso- Call your members of Congress through the Capitol switchboard: (800) 839-5276.

InSANE

It would have cost \$14 Billion to strengthen New Orleans levees against a Category 4 Hurricane. However, Bush cut funding for the Army Corps of Engineers' levee enhancement budget during his first term. Why? Because he had to slash domestic needs in order to pay for the invasion of Iraq so as to "protect our homeland." But now, with the Iraq death toll rising, and Katrina's costs nearing \$300 billion, it is clear to all that when it comes to protecting America, Bush's priorities are InSane.

Help Continue The Momentum To End The War.

According to MSNBC 500,000 people attended the demonstration in D.C. on September 24th. The weekend ended with feelings of unity, energy and hope. Yet the war still rages and there is much work left to do!

Support Peace Action's organizing of grassroots political power to end the war.

Н	Here is my contribution: ☐\$35☐\$100 ☐\$250 ☐ Other \$					
	OR Visa, Mastercard, Discover #	Exp				
MAG	Name as it appears on card:					
230	Address					



Peace Action contingents from across the country delivered a message to Bush on September 24th.

Because we are working to change the nuclear and war policies of the government, your contributions are not tax deductible.

gno.noitoe-aceaction.org

Sept. 24th Rally a Huge

Silver Spring, MD 20910 1100 Wayne Ave. Ste 1020 The merger of SANE and The Muclear Freeze

